

Leon County Community Garden Application package



Leon County's Community Garden Program

This application package is for citizens who wish to create gardens on County property. To be approved, these gardens must be operated and maintained by an organized group of a minimum of eight citizens. The food grown shall be for use by participating gardeners or distribution to non-profit entities and shall not be sold.

Overview, Eligibility and Appropriate Sites

County community gardens shall be for use by Leon County residents. The garden should enhance the usefulness of the property to the public and improve neighborhood vitality. Sites must be approved by the County to ensure that they are free of land-use conflicts, environmental constraints, or safety concerns. Gardens must be properly maintained or the County shall revoke permission to individuals or groups to continue gardening on the County property.

Steps in Garden Application Process

1. Applicants review and complete all items. Submission of the completed packet requires obtaining pledges of commitment from a total of 8 gardeners.
2. Each prospective gardener must enter into a participation agreement with the County that includes signing a waiver of liability and applying for a Special Restricted Use Permit.
3. Upon receipt of the application package, the County will coordinate review with affected internal departments regarding site suitability and other considerations as stated in the application.
4. Within 30 days, the applicant will be notified of approval or denial of the application. If the application is denied, the reasons will be stated. If County assistance is requested, applicants will be notified of the type(s) and amount of money granted.
5. Garden organizers are encouraged to hold an orientation session for gardeners, in conjunction with a consultation with Cooperative Extension.
6. Construction on the garden will begin upon approval by Office of Sustainability in consultation with County departments.

Instructions and Application Checklist

Applicants need to fill in requested information on this package. The package will be reviewed by County staff for compliance with Leon County's Community Garden Policy.

CHECKLIST

The following materials must be reviewed and completed as instructed for the application package:

- ☐ Item 1. Basic application information
- ☐ Item 2. Statement of purpose
- ☐ Item 3. Site Information
- ☐ Item 4. Roster of gardeners and pledges of commitment
- ☐ Item 5. Garden operation plan
- ☐ Item 6. Garden rules and operating procedures
- ☐ Item 7. Participation agreement and waiver of liability
- ☐ Item 8. Request for assistance (if desired)

Once application package is complete, deliver to:

Kathryn Ziewitz, Leon County Sustainability Coordinator

e-mail: ZiewitzK@LeonCountyFl.gov

Fax: 850.606.5301

Street mail: Office of Sustainability
301 S. Monroe St., Suite 502
Tallahassee, FL 32301

If you have questions about the preparation of your application, please contact: Kathryn Ziewitz, Sustainability Coordinator and community garden program administrator.

Email: ZiewitzK@LeonCountyFl.gov, Leon County, telephone at 606-5383.

Thank you for your application. You will be contacted upon receipt of all materials.

ITEM 1. BASIC APPLICATION INFORMATION

1. Application Date:

2. Address of proposed garden site (or intersecting roads):

3. Parcel # of proposed site, if available:

4. Name of proposed community garden: (If located on an already-named County facility, for the purpose of simplicity, the garden name should be the same)

5. Contact Information for primary Garden Organizer:

Name:

Address:

Phone number(s):

Mailing address:

e-mail:

ITEM 2. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Requirements and Expectations

The main purpose of a County community garden is to grow produce to improve nutrition and food security for residents in nearby neighborhoods. Additional benefits of community gardens include:

- *Improving health and nutrition for those without easy access to fresh vegetables or space to garden*
- *Increasing sense of community by having neighbors working side-by-side*
- *Promoting sharing of techniques by fellow gardeners and educating adults and children on the process of growing food*
- *Utilizing public space in a productive and aesthetically appealing fashion*
- *Providing opportunities for recreation and intergenerational interaction*

Gardens may enable demonstrations about healthy cooking and nutrition. Overall, establishment of a community garden on a County site should enhance the usefulness of the property to the public and improve neighborhood vitality.

In the space below, or in an attached letter, please answer the follow questions to support your request to establish the garden.

1. What is the present land use at the proposed site, and how would the garden enhance the usefulness of the property to the public or improve the neighborhood?

2. What is the purpose of the proposed garden? (i.e.: why is a garden wanted and who is expected to use it?)

ITEM 3. SITE INFORMATION

Requirements and Expectations

Any County garden site proposed for a community garden must be free of land-use conflicts, environmental, or safety concerns. Ideal sites for community gardens are County properties that:

- *Are close to neighborhoods with apartments and townhomes where space for personal gardens is lacking*
- *Are in locations at existing community centers, libraries, or other facilities that already serve as community gathering spaces*
- *Have developed water sources in place*
- *Have community support*

1. Describe reasons this site is a good location for a community garden. Note: all potential sites must have at least six hours of sunlight.

2. Provide here or on additional sheets a sketch of the proposed garden. Indicate the dimensions proposed for the garden site and how it is located relative to roads, fences, buildings or other structures, water spigots, trees, and other prominent features. Include a north arrow to indicate direction. Also indicate where gardeners might park vehicles.

ITEM 4. ROSTER OF GARDENERS AND PLEDGES OF COMMITMENT

Requirements and Expectations:

A successful garden requires a commitment from a group of gardeners to maintain the garden over an extended period of time. A minimum two-year commitment from a total of at least eight (8) gardeners is required.

Although each member of a community garden is responsible for the construction and proper maintenance of the garden, the leadership of a garden organizer is also necessary. In addition to overall coordination of garden activities, the organizer serves as the point of contact between the County and the gardeners. The garden organizer shall serve as the primary contact, and the assistant organizer as an alternate contact to fill in when the garden organizer is not available.

Community garden groups are encouraged to independently develop bylaws and guidelines, and to collect garden club dues. Gardens are intended to be open to any Leon County citizen who expresses interest in joining. If the garden is full, names of people wishing to join should be taken and new members added on a first-come, first-serve basis. Resources for help with forming garden clubs are included at the end of this application.

The garden organizer is in charge of the following duties (this does not preclude delegating some duties to other garden club members):

- Act as main point of contact to the County and to the public
- Maintain up-to-date roster of participating gardeners
- Ensure that all gardeners have signed the participation agreement and waiver of liability
- Assign garden plots as needed
- Submit a revised roster of garden members within two weeks when garden members change
- Maintaining a waiting list for plots
- Issue warnings to gardeners whose plots are neglected
- Coordinate work days for maintaining garden as a whole
- Supervising the completion of a brief annual report to the County stating number of plot holders, how produce was used, and any educational or outreach events that took place at garden
- Notify the County garden program administrator if the group wishes to terminate this agreement
- Notify the County garden program administrator if the garden organizer changes

By signing below, the lead garden organizer and alternate garden organizer agree to fulfill the duties as specified.

1) Lead garden organizer contact information:

Printed Name:

Address:

Phone number(s):

e-mail:

Signature _____

2) Alternate garden organizer contact:

Printed Name:

Address:

Phone number(s):

e-mail:

Signature _____

Gardener Information

Please provide contact information and signatures of those pledging a two-year commitment. In addition to the organizer and assistant organizer, at least six more gardeners are needed. Each member of the garden group agrees to work together to keep the community garden safe, usable, and attractive. The group is responsible for deciding how to divide the work and time required of each member of the group.

Plot assignments should be awarded from a waiting list or on a first- come first- served basis. Plots may be used for personal, non-commercial purposes only.

Pledge: By signing below, I formally pledge to be an active participant in the creation and maintenance of the community garden for which this application is being made. My participation entails taking responsibility for a garden plot within the garden, abiding by the garden rules and sustainable practices, and keeping my plot and the garden as a whole safe, usable, and attractive. In the event that I wish to discontinue gardening, I agree to promptly notify the garden coordinator. It is my duty to contact the garden organizer if my contact information changes.

1. Printed name

Printed Name:

Address:

Phone number(s):

e-mail:

2. Printed Name:

Address:

Phone number(s):

e-mail:

3. Printed Name:
Address:
Phone number(s):
e-mail:

4. Printed Name:
Address:
Phone number(s):
e-mail:

5. Printed Name:
Address:
Phone number(s):
e-mail:

6. Printed Name:
Address:
Phone number(s):
e-mail:

[Optional: names of additional gardeners below]

7. Printed name
Printed Name:
Address:
Phone number(s):
e-mail:

8. Printed Name:
Address:
Phone number(s):
e-mail:

9. Printed Name:
Address:
Phone number(s):
e-mail:

10. Printed Name:
Address:
Phone number(s):
e-mail:
[additional names may be added]

ITEM 5.GARDEN OPERATION PLAN

Requirements and Expectations

Before establishment, the plan for a garden should be shared with the local Neighborhood Association, if one exists. Gardens must be maintained on a regular basis and with planning. This section asks you to describe in general terms your plan for garden establishment, operation, and maintenance.

If your application is approved, your garden group is eligible for a site consultation from the Leon County Cooperative Extension Service to review best practices and to tailor the garden to meet site conditions. Such a consultation could be arranged in conjunction with an orientation session, which is encouraged. This orientation would be arranged by the garden group.

Approved garden groups are required to submit brief annual reports by February 1st.

Below, please outline your general plans for operating and maintaining the garden. Please address the following topics:

- What is the initial number of plot holders?
- What is your plan for garden construction?
- What is your plan for outreach to adjacent property owners and neighbors?
- Do you plan to conduct an orientation session?
- How will common areas (such as garden paths) be shared by all the gardeners be maintained?
- Will you have regular work days?
- Will there be a deadline set for planting at the start of the season and for clean-up at the end of the season?
- What is the plan for use of the produce?
- Do you plan educational or outreach events?

Item 6. Garden Rules and Operating Procedures

Requirements and expectations

Community Gardens on Leon County property must abide by the rules and practices outlined below.

1. Gardening Best Practices. Gardens supported by the County should follow sustainable gardening practices. Following these practices avoids overuse of water, storm-water runoff, and pollution from agricultural chemicals.

- Organic soil amendments are the preferred source of plant nutrients.
- Any application of manufactured fertilizer shall be consistent with label instructions.
- Inorganic weed killers shall not be used; instead, weeding should be performed to keep plots and walkways tidy.
- Organic methods shall be the preferred manner of dealing with pests and diseases.
- Any use of pesticides and insecticides shall be consistent with label instructions and must follow best practices as put forth by the Leon County Cooperative Extension Service (<http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/>).
- Composting of on-site garden waste is encouraged. Compost must be contained in an aesthetically pleasing manner, whether a plastic bin, tumbler, or framed wood structure.
- Gardeners shall conserve water. Water should not be left running in a gardener's absence.
- The garden layout should discourage erosion and storm-water runoff.

2. Garden Maintenance. Individuals and/or groups seeking use of County property for gardens shall agree to maintain a tidy garden.

- The garden should be kept free of invasive exotic plants or vines that spread beyond the garden area.
- Garden paths should be mulched or otherwise be kept free of weeds.
- Plots should be kept tidy and the soil stabilized at all times, including after harvest.
- Tools, hoses, and other gardening equipment should be removed from the site when not in use.
- Gardeners consent to weed or otherwise clean up garden plots upon request from the County.

3. Prohibited Activities

Activities that are not permitted in County community gardens include but are not limited to:

- Pets
- Unsupervised children
- Playing of loud, amplified music
- Smoking
- Littering
- Dumping
- Alcohol consumption
- Sale of garden produce
- Sampling of other gardener's plots without express permission
- Application of agricultural chemicals including fertilizer, pesticides, insecticides, or herbicides in a manner that is not consistent with label instructions or with Florida law
- Installation of permanent structures at garden sites
- Expansion of the garden without explicit County approval

4. Annual report and listing on County websites

The garden group shall submit a brief annual report each January that reports the number of gardeners, use of the produce, and any special educational or other activities held at the garden. Photos are invited. The garden will be listed on County websites.

5. Termination of the garden

- The County reserves the right to revoke permission to individuals or groups to garden on a County site based on observations of poor maintenance or ability of the garden group to meet the standards set forth here.
- If the group decides to no longer maintain the garden, the primary contact should immediately notify the County. The gardeners will be responsible for restoring the garden to a vegetated and stabilized condition with non-invasive, non-exotic plants.
- The County reserves the right to end use of the property for gardening due to unforeseen reasons. In such a case, the County would provide notice as far in advance as possible and would attempt to suggest an alternative location.

ITEM 7. PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY—One per Gardener

Special Restricted Use Permit must be obtained at a later stage of application.

ITEM 8. REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

Leon County may support gardeners whose applications are approved as deemed appropriate to the site.

County material support may include:

- Soil amendments (coarse and fine mulch), available from Solid Waste
- Rain barrels and/or compost bins, available from Solid Waste/Recycling
- Assistance from Public Works in installation of fencing or water supply/plumbing

In addition, gardeners may apply for a grant not to exceed \$500, contingent upon the availability of funds, to pay for:

- Enhancement of water supply
- Fencing materials
- Lumber and other materials for construction of garden beds (green, pressure-treated wood, concrete blocks, or other non-toxic materials)
- Purchase of soils amendments including topsoil or mushroom compost

Grant funds shall not be used for construction of accessory structures such as benches, tables, and storage sheds.

Finally, technical support is available from arrangement by the Leon County Cooperative Extension Service.

If your group wishes to apply, specify the assistance you are requesting:

Materials

___ Soil amendments (coarse and fine mulch), available from Solid Waste

___ Rain barrels and/or compost bins, available from Solid Waste/Recycling

___ Assistance from Public Works in installation of fencing or water supply/plumbing

Grant Funding

Amount requested (not to exceed \$500): _____

Describe end use(s) for request:

Technical Assistance

Do you desire a site visit from Cooperative Extension?

APPENDIX 1. ANNUAL GARDEN REPORT

In accordance with the agreement made between gardeners and the County, the gardeners agree to submit a brief annual report each February 1 stating the number of plot holders that used the garden, how produce was used, and any educational or outreach events that occurred during the year.

Please fill out the form and return by Send by February 1st to Leon County at Sustainability@leoncountyfl.gov. Please include any photographs showing the garden.

Name of Community Garden:

Address:

Name of Lead garden organizer:

Number of gardeners:

How was produce from the garden used:

Describe any special events that took place at the garden:

Resources

Fort Braden Community Garden Website

<http://www.fortbradengarden.com/>

Tallahassee Food Network

<http://tallahasseefoodnetwork.blogspot.com/>

Leon County Cooperative Extension

<http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/>

American Community Gardening Association

<http://www.communitygarden.org/learn/starting-a-community-garden.php>